

REVIEWS

PSYCHIATRY. By E. W. Anderson. (Pp. vii + 296. 16s.) Concise Medical Textbook Series. London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1964.

THIS book is one of the first volumes to be published in a new series for students and entitled Concise Medical Textbooks. It would appear that these are designed to replace the Students' Aids Series which, for many years, has been so popular with undergraduates. The format is much more attractive than that of its predecessor, "Aids to Psychiatry," and both print and page have been enlarged. This new book is addressed not only to medical students but to a wider audience which includes psychiatric social workers and postgraduates in training for a Diploma in Psychological Medicine.

Much of the text shows little change from that found in "Aids to Psychiatry" but a separate chapter which has now been devoted to "Drug Treatment in Psychiatry" gives a succinct and balanced appraisal of this aspect of therapy. The various clinical syndromes are well described but the reviewer feels that, in its current form, the chapter on psychopathology might make laborious reading for the undergraduate embarking on his psychiatric studies. No mention is made of the Mental Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1961, although English legislation is clearly outlined. However, this book succeeds in presenting a concise account of current practical psychiatry and its very modest price is an asset.

S. J. K.

OBSTETRICS. By J. M. Holmes, M.D., B.S.(Lond.), M.R.C.O.G. (Pp. 256; figs. 37. 15s.) Concise Medical Textbook Series. London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1964.

THIS is one of a new series of Concise Medical Textbooks aimed at "placing in the hands of the student books which will help him to acquire a grasp of his subject." In his preface the author, remarking that a concise textbook cannot be complete, claims that he has written a dogmatic summary which includes many recent advances in obstetric practice. This is a very fair description of the clinical sections which make up more than five-sixths of this clearly written and easily read little book. It is a pity, however, that the Imperial system has been used throughout when nowadays medical students are being encouraged to use the metric. The use of X-rays is advocated during pregnancy without any mention of the small but definite risk to the foetus attendant upon this. The tenderness of pyelonephritis is said to occur in the costovertebral instead of in the renal angle and not many will agree that potassium citrate by mouth plays any part in the modern treatment of this condition, nor myomectomy in the management of red degeneration in a fibroid during pregnancy even "on rare occasions."

In future editions it would be worthwhile considering omitting the chapters on anatomy and physiology which are less satisfactory than the clinical sections and contain some inaccuracies, and expanding the rest of the book to include fuller treatment of the sections on, for example, placenta praevia and the medical and surgical complications of pregnancy. The book is attractively bound and the type is pleasing, but the illustrations unfortunately leave a great deal to be desired—as is so often the case in British textbooks today.

In spite of these deficiencies the author and publishers have attained their aims to a considerable degree and the book is likely to find favour in the hands of medical students approaching obstetrics for the first time.

J. H. M. P.

DERMATOLOGY. By R. M. B. Mackenna and E. L. Cohen. (Pp. 279. 17s. 6d.) Concise Medical Textbook Series. London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1964.

THIS is our old friend, "Aids to Dermatology" by the same authors, in a new disguise with an improved and more modern cover design and with a somewhat larger page size, but with essentially the same volume of material and, indeed, often the same text as in the older editions of Aids. Once again illustrations have been reduced to the absolute minimum and the authors have confined themselves to a photograph showing the skin